



**CHRIST'S
SEAMLESS
GARMENT.**

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CHRIST'S SEAMLESS GARMENT.

JOHN XIX, 23.

a. P. Adams

I have often times thought in the past—what did the seamless coat of Jesus represent? I have felt that it must have some important significance, but could never decide just what it was. Now the solution of the matter comes to me in my own experience. Our garments are our outward coverings; they make up our outward *appearance*; they ought to signify then, one's character as it appears to the world, or to those most intimately connected with him at home, in his business and pleasure, every day in the week. We shall find if we look through the Scripture that the apparel is referred to with the above significance, both to denote the wicked and the righteous; thus pride and violence are represented as the garments of the wicked in Psa. LXXIII, 6; and in Psa. CIX. 18 the wicked are "clothed with cursing." So on

the other hand the righteous are clothed with the "garment of praise" and "the robe of righteousness." (Isa. LXI, 3, 10), they "keep their garments" (Rev. XVI, 15) and their garments are not "defiled" (Rev. III, 4) they hate "even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23, and they shall "walk with God in white." All this shows the symbolical significance of the garments—the character, the real, true nature as *expressed* in word and act, and *lived* from day to day. Now of course no one can live a pure holy life unless they possess the spirit of holiness and purity within; hence the outward character indicates the inward nature or spirit; this is always true; if the entire outward life of an individual is known, his real nature and spirit is known, just as surely as the tree is known by its fruit. One might conceal his real true character from a part of his associates; some portions of his life might be a pretense and a sham; but if you knew him (or her) intimately, in all his life, from morning to night (and I might add especially, from night to morning) you would know him as he really is, for in numberless ways a person will betray himself, let him try never so hard to conceal his real character, and most people will have some associates, and some part of their life where they will make no pretense of concealment, but will act out freely whatever is in them; in their

own family, or among their own business associates, or bosom friends, and especially in the relation of husband and wife, they will fully act *themselves*.

Most people will have several character garments with frequent changes and variations; their apparel in this respect will have many rents and patches, with numberless seams, because of the many shapes and forms that have to be accommodated and "fitted" for various occasions and different persons.

But Jesus wore one unvarying, beautiful, rich,

SEAMLESS *Garment.*

Do you catch the idea? Is it not a revelation to you? Jesus had no need to "make himself up" for any particular occasion or to meet any particular person; he did not have to "put on" or "put off"—he possessed one perfect flawless character for all occasions and all persons; *he* wore a seamless garment; and since my soul has been reaching out of late with more intense longing for perfect likeness to Jesus, I have come to see what this *seamless* garment symbolizes; the many seams in a garment indicate the extreme effort to make it *fit*; or they might indicate the scantiness of the original material, or the poverty or limitations of its manufacture. In all these respects the many seamed garments would well represent the character of the natural man. The lives of

most people are extremely artificial ; they live in spots and not all the time ; that is to say, they are gotten up with elaborate care and elegance for special occasions, and are perfectly reckless and indifferent concerning the main part of their life, or again, in other words, their real *life*, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, is totally neglected and ignored ; like a fair garden overrun with weeds and brambles, so the lives of most people are left to take any course as it may happen according to surroundings and circumstances, and the individual cares not so long as he, or she, may *shine* now and then upon special occasions. Such persons have many garments with many seams made to fit many shapes and forms ; garments for those they like, and garments for those they dislike ; garments for those whose favor and good will they wish to propitiate, and garments for those for whose opinion they do not care a straw ; garments for home and garments for abroad ; garments for the regular inmates of the house and members of the family, and garments for "company" ; a garment for the employer, and a garment for the employee ; a garment for the man out of whom they expect to make a dollar, and a garment for him who is not worth a cent to them. O what an immense wardrobe most people have on this line ! and how often they shift their clothes !—a dozen times in

as many minutes perhaps as they turn from one to another in the daily walks of life ; the change can be made instantaneously, as when a woman with scowling face, and complaining, petulant tongue on the way to the front door to answer the summons of a caller whom she does not want to see, suddenly changes her whole apparel as she opens the door, and with smiling face and cordial greeting ushers in her unwelcome guest.

Were you ever annoyed (perhaps I ought to say exasperated) at the business manners of the world ? take a railroad official for example ; you rush up to him and ask a question ; it is all important to you ; he does not even look at you or apparently pay the slightest attention to you, nevertheless he answers, but in such a monotonous indifferent manner, that you look at him impatiently to see if he knows what he is talking about ; no matter how many questions you might ask, he will reply in the same manner ; on no account would he manifest the slightest personal interest in you ; you cannot even catch his eye ; he gives you to understand by his manner that you are simply one of ten thousand, and it makes no difference to him whether you understand, or whether you get your train or not ; he has on his official garb, close buttoned to chin and on no account will he bate one thread, or move a single button. If

this same young man should come to your door with a book to sell, a clothes wringer, or a sewing machine, he would have on an entirely different suit ; then, if you let him in, he would be interested in you, and in the baby, and all your relations ; if you were willing to talk he would listen with rapt attention and the most demonstrative appreciation, and in every way seek to make you feel that he had the highest respect and esteem for you, and that although he *had* called upon others with his wares, yet his call upon you was entirely special and particular.

So the world goes,—many suits—many masks—many cloaks—of sham, pretense, fraud, chicanery, flattery, hypocrisy, cant, humbug and deceit. Moreover these character garbs are oftentimes very thin ; they deceive no one, you can see right through them, and even those who wear them know that they are deceiving no one. But it is the way of the world, society demands it, or business or social custom and conventionality. When I was away a while ago I went into the store of a brother and sat there talking with him ; while there a nicely dressed gentleman came in and greeted the proprietor with such effusive politeness and such extreme solicitude for his health and general well being that I said to myself at once, “ that man has something to sell,” and so it ultimately turned out. He was a perfect stranger to me ; there was nothing

about him to indicate the traveling salesman ; he had no satchel or box of samples or anything of that kind, but just his extravagant manner of greeting gave him away, and showed to me that he had a garb on for the occasion.

One more illustration. A sister told me of a man that she became acquainted with whom at first she liked very much ; he had a pleasant, courteous way and was a very interesting talker, especially on religious subjects ; but she noticed that his wife seemed to have a very sad face and a dejected, spiritless manner ; she wondered at this, but one evening it was all explained ; she had met the man several times and was much pleased with him, until one evening she and her husband were at his house ; the three were together in one room talking ; and the man's wife was in an adjoining room apparently attending to some household duty ; after a little the wife appeared at the door and requested the husband to step out into the other room for a moment ; he complied apparently willingly, stepped from one room into the other, and hastily swung the door to behind him ; it did not latch, however, but stood ajar so that the visitor heard the man say to his wife in a very ugly coarse manner—"What in —— [using a common expression] do you want of me now ?" That was all she heard, but it was a revelation ; the veil of that man's true character was lifted

and she caught a glimpse of his real life, all else was mere outward seeming, garments thrown on or off as occasion might require; of course the charm of his society was gone for that lady, and so to was her respect; she could scarcely conceal her resentment and indignation when a little later he returned with a smiling face and soft and courteous speeches; she cut her visit as short as possible, and never cared to call on him again.

Alas, how many there are in the world who, if their real, private life was thus exposed—laid bare to the gaze, just as it actually was—would become objects of contempt and scorn to their most valued friends and associates! What a grand thing it would be if one had nothing to conceal! nothing of which he need be ashamed even in his most private and secret life! how blessed to be thus “unspotted from the world!”—to be able to invite the closest scrutiny and to bear the strongest light upon every secret act and word and thought! Such was the life of Christ. Such may be the life of him who walks with God and wears the seamless garment of Christ’s righteousness.

“Everything is naked and open to the eye of him with whom we have to do.” “That which is spoken in the chamber shall be proclaimed on the house top,” for “there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed”—

every garment stripped off—and the hidden things of darkness and the counsels of the heart brought to light, and then—shall every man receive praise of God. (1 Cor. iv. 5). O marvellous Love of God that “covereth all things!”

O my God, How shall mortal man be just before thee? the answer comes from thy Word—by simply accepting the righteousness provided—the Lord Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto *us*, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. As the “perfect Peace” is “the Peace of God,” and the “perfect Love,” is “the Love of God,” so the perfect Righteousness is “the Righteousness of God” which is the Righteousness of “the perfect Man,” even “that which is through the faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by faith,” (Phil. III. 9) for Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that *we* might be made the righteousness of God *in Him* (2 Cor. v. 21), and thus having *his* righteousness, we have his character, and wear his seamless garment—not to perfection as yet, but—we follow on.

In the April number we noticed the character of Christ as the Model Man; his was a perfect life in all things that we call *little*, as well as in the great things, and his friends and his enemies, all bore testimony to this fact. Twice we are told of the wonderment of his mother at the strange happenings in connection

with him and his marvellous sayings; (Luke II, 19, 51) the people were "astonished at his doctrine" the Sadducees and Pharisees marvelled at his answers when they tried to entangle him in his talk, and they durst not ask him any more questions; the common people wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; the soldiers that were sent to arrest him came back awe-struck and bewildered saying, "never man spake like this man"; even Pilate, speaking wiser than he knew, and for all humanity, declared—"I find no fault in him." That has been the verdict of the world ever since—No fault in him—No fault in him—wrung even from the unwilling lips of infidels and scoffers, and joyously proclaimed by those who have learned to love him; and this sinless, faultless character of Christ may be *yours*; and you are on the way to that blessed consummation if you are "yielded" to God. He is the Potter, thou art the clay, and he is moulding and fashioning *thee* into the same image, that thou mayest be one with the Father and the Son, as the Father and the Son are one; the process has begun and is progressing, and it will include Spirit, Soul and Body—and in this order. Spirit first, the "renewing of your mind," a change in the motive power and the *springs* of action; then it touches the soul, natural life, one's outward, visible manner of living, clothing you with the Seamless

Garment, and finally the body is quickened and preserved blameless unto the presence of the Lord. There is much Scripture on this point, especially the quickening of the body, but I shall have to leave that for the next issue. I wish to add a few more words in this article on the seamless garment of Jesus.

What a fuss and bother the dress of men and women cause, especially of women! what waste of time! what needless expense! what vexation and fret and worry over the fabric and fashion of that which at the best is the badge of our shame, and a constant witness of our lost estate; for in sinless Eden the man and the woman were naked and were not ashamed (Gen. II, 25). How much more beautiful these garments might be, and how much more simple, and what endless trouble be saved thereby! Until that which is perfect is come, the human figure should be *draped*, not *fitted*; the accentuation of physical contour is simply an effort to blunt or destroy the shame without removing its cause, i. e. sin: shame is a wholesome guard against moral corruption, and to remove it or to deaden it before sin is put an end to (Dan. ix, 24) is a wrong to humanity. Much of the modern style of dress has this effect however. But it is not my object in the present article to criticise modern dress, or to advocate any "dress reform"; all that will adjust itself as the

inward life is renewed and developed. But I want to apply all this on the spiritual plane.

The seamless garment of Jesus suggests to me a perfect outward manner appropriate to all persons and to all occasions ; a manner so courteous, so gentle, so fitting for *all* times that it need be *fitted* to none ; always appropriate, always consistent, always perfectly adapted to time and place and occasion—because—it was the outgrowth of a perfectly harmonious being ; spirit, soul and body in harmony with the Creator, and hence with power of perfect adjustment to every creature. Such was the seamless garment of Christ, and for this royal vesture my soul longs exceedingly.

Ordinary religious life is a good deal like the worldly life, especially with reference to dress, i. e. outward appearance ; there is a great deal of fuss and bother and worry about keeping up the proprieties in connection with “ our church ” ; and so too in connection with ourselves, much more is thought of outward appearance than of the real inward life ; religious meetings, speaking and praying, outward religious ceremonies and exercises, the more numerous and the more punctiliously observed because of the meagreness of the inward life ; just like the fuss and worry of the world concerning outward dress, so the ordinary “ professor ” takes great care of all religious seeming,

and is all the more particular to bring out and emphasize particular religious *features*, as for example, the musical performance of choir or quartett, church decorations or appointments, outward forms and ceremonies such as responsive reading and other congregational participation in the services, vestments, the observance of fast days and numerous religious holidays, etc., etc. I do not refer to these outward things as wrong or hurtful in themselves; in fact they may be of great value and utility. But I want to call the readers attention to the fact that these outward observances are insisted upon and made especially prominent by many a religionist and churchman just in proportion to the lack of the real "life of God" in himself and in the church; and as dress on the natural plane is the badge of sin and shame, so likewise on the spiritual plane, for all this fuss and worry concerning religious appearance is the plainest sign of the church's fallen condition, as an unfaithful spouse (2 Cor. XI, 2, 3) copying after the world; and this again is like destroying the pain without removing the cause, for the more striking and prominent this outwardness of religion is made, the more will its blind and shallow devotees be persuaded of its prosperity and advancement, when in fact it is destitute of spiritual life and overwhelmed with worldliness; nevertheless being persuaded that everything is

all right, as long as the outward show is kept up, no effort is made to correct the terrible wrong ; in fact it is not known that there *is* anything wrong, and thus we have the Laodicean church pure and simple.

“Because thou *sayest*, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

What saith the Spirit to these deluded, destitute and yet self-satisfied ones ? “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire [compare 1 Cor. III. 10-15] that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.” There are mines of treasure and mints of gold here, but our present subject is simply the raiment. The Laodicean church is naked and knows it not. Here is nakedness without innocence, and without even the knowledge that clothing is needed. Anoint thine eyes with eye salve, and buy the white raiment and the tried gold and then shalt thou be fully equipped for “the evil day.” The white raiment is the garment of Christ’s righteousness ; that righteousness is “the divine nature,” of which believers are made “partakers,” in Christ Jesus ; possessing that nature, it will shine out in the life, as the inner glory of Jesus

shone out on the mount of transfiguration, so that his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light, shining, exceeding white as snow, such as no fuller on earth could white them.

Oh for that inner glory! then it will shine out in the raiment—the outward life, and men shall take knowledge of thee that thou hast been with Jesus and learned of him, and thou shalt be a living epistle known and read of all men. Oh, how my soul doth long for that perfect nature that I may possess the seamless garment! Oh, how wearisome are the shallow, empty ways of the world, when once we have “tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come!” An thou wilt, dear Lord, make me all thine own, at any cost; let all the filthy garments be taken from thy Joshua, let his iniquity pass away, clothe him a *change* of raiment, and put a fair mitre upon his head (Zech. III). How long, O Lord, shall thy children wait for deliverance! how long before they awake in thy likeness! Where is the seamless garment, which was so beautiful that even thine enemies would not rend it! Let it fall upon thy Joshua, for verily his soul doth exceeding long to be clothed upon with the house from heaven. Even so, Lord Jesus, Come.

“Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he

that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. XVI, 15).

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